GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3888
ANSWERED ON:09.08.2017
Tampering with IMEI Number
Gogoi Shri Gaurav;Scindia Shri Jyotiraditya Madhavrao

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to make tampering of IMEI number in mobile devices a punishable offence;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a large number of mobile phones/devices are in operation with fake IMEI numbers;

(d) if so, the details thereof and whether the use of mobile device with fake IMEI is posing threat to the security of the nation; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the steps Union Government proposes to take in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE (IC) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS &
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI MANOJ SINHA)

(a) & (b) Yes Madam, Department of Telecommunications (DoT) is under process to frame 'The prevention of tampering of Mobile Device Equipment Identification Number, Rules 2017' under Section 7(2) read with Section 25 of Indian Telegraph Act 1885 to prevent the tampering of mobile device equipment identification number by making intentional removal, obliteration, change or altering of mobile phone equipment identification number an illegal offence except for the manufacturer.

(c) to (e) Incidences of use of mobile phones/devices with fake International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) have come to the notice of the government. Mobile phones/devices with fake IMEI make tracing of the lost/or stolen handsets difficult. It is to be noted that IMEI is allotted to mobile phones/devices by Global System for Mobile Association (GSMA) through its reporting bodies, which maintains list of IMEI allocated. However, DoT is implementing Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) in a phased manner with an aim to curtail the counterfeit mobile phone market and discourage mobile phone theft, in order to protect consumer interest and facilitate law enforcement authorities for lawful interception. CEIR intends to connect IMEI database of all mobile Operators and act as a central system for all telecom network operators to share black listed mobile terminals so that devices blacklisted in one network will not work on other networks even if the Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) card in the mobile device is changed. Government has also taken following steps in this regard:

(i) The instructions have been issued by DoT vide letter dated 27.11.2009 directing all the telecom service providers that calls from mobile handsets with any IMEI number which is not available in the latest updated IMEI database of Global System for Mobile Association (GSMA) or without IMEI or with zeroes only as IMEI should not be processed and must be rejected with effect from 30.11.2009.

(ii) After due consultations with Ministry of Home Affairs, Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) and Industry, the amended Notification has been issued vide No. 107/ (RE-2013)/2009-2014 dated 16th January, 2015 which prohibits import of 'GSM Mobile Handsets' without IMEI No. , with all zeroes IMEI, duplicate IMEI or fake IMEI and CDMA mobile phones without Electronic Serial Number (ESN)/ Mobile Equipment Identifier (MEID), with all zeroes as ESN/MEID, duplicate ESN/MEID or fake ESN/MEID with immediate effect.

(iii) In collaboration with GSMA which allocates IMEI, the IMEI Cloning and Duplication Restriction (ICDR) system has been installed across the country for validation of genuine IMEI by the customs authorities. DoT in consultation with CBEC has issued a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for validation process of genuine IMEI at the ports of import to ensure that mobile handsets with fake / duplicate IMEI are prevented from entry into the country.

(iv) DoT also provides technical assistance in detection of mobile handsets, as and when required by the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs).

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